United Nations A/73/261

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 July 2018
English
Original: Spanish

Seventy-third session
Items 61 and 63 of the provisional agenda*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Note verbale dated 16 July 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations has the honour to transmit herewith the Declaration of the Cuban United Nations Association in solidarity with Puerto Rico, adopted on 1 June 2018 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations kindly requests the Secretary-General to have the present note verbale and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 61 and 63.

* A/73/150.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 16 July 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Declaration of the Cuban United Nations Association in solidarity with Puerto Rico

The Cuban United Nations Association, a Cuban non-profit non-governmental organization founded on 30 May 1947 in accordance with the principles and purposes of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, with which it is affiliated, has had special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 1999. It attends the United Nations Annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations and represents brings together 105 Cuban civil society member organizations that cooperate and work together to defend firmly the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and support the just causes of peoples.

On the basis of these principles we reaffirm solidarity with the Puerto Rican people and their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with resolution 1514 (XV) of the General Assembly. We join the international call for the independence of Puerto Rico, which struggles to free itself of the shameful colonialism imposed by the United States of America, disguised under the name of a commonwealth, without any freedom or right to decide on the destiny of the country.

The people of Puerto Rico, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules established by international law, have not been able to exercise their right to self-determination since the establishment of the so-called commonwealth, which masks the colonial exploitation to which they are still subjected.

There is fresh concern, because the United States Congress, invoking its plenary powers under the Territorial Clause of the United States Constitution, imposed in June 2016 a Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico (fiscal oversight board), appointed by the President of the United States to exercise plenary control powers over the elected executive and legislative officials of the Government of Puerto Rico in all issues relating to fiscal, economic and budgetary matters, as well as all that concerns the restructuring of the public debt of Puerto Rico, all of which aggravates the colonial situation in the country,

The people of Puerto Rico suffer and are neglected. The economic and financial crisis faced by that nation is becoming more serious. The present political subordination of the Puerto Rican people impedes sovereign decision-making regarding the humanitarian crisis caused by the effects of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which have aggravated the already serious economic and social problems, resulting in increased levels of poverty in Puerto Rico from 45 per cent to around 60 per cent of the population, which has caused mass migration and seriously affected efforts to achieve sustainable economic development,

The persecution and repressive actions undertaken on 1 May 2018 by police forces against peaceful marches of men, women and children demanding that their needs be met and their rights respected left dozens of persons wounded, violating the right to freedom of expression of citizens.

In the interests of contributing to the fulfilment of the aims and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and to express solidarity and support for just causes and denounce instances of human rights violations that affect people in a systematic

manner, the Cuban United Nations Association demands that the Government of the United States comply with the decisions of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples of the United Nations in order to allow the people of Puerto Rico to engage in a process of self-determination on its future as an independent and sovereign nation, as set out in resolution 1514 (XV) of the United Nations General Assembly on the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

We reiterate our support for the call by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States to focus on a solution for the decolonization of Puerto Rico, as befits this Caribbean nation, so that it may eventually become a sovereign and independent Puerto Rico.

Havana, 1 June 2018